

This week I took part in a hearing sponsored by the “Rural Solutions Group” that discussed the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) assault on rural America. You can view video of my immediate reaction to the forum [here](#). The Rural Solutions Group is an informal group of like-minded House lawmakers focused on addressing issues important to rural America. The Obama Administration has dramatically expanded the size and scope of the federal government, from health care to increased regulation of the free market. But the massive government intrusion being perpetrated by the EPA’s various rulemakings has been done out of sight of the American public. There is no region that has felt the devastating impact of EPA regulation more than Northern California. Blind to the realities of life in the real world, particularly in rural America, this rogue agency is intent on attacking every aspect of our way of life. From its finding that carbon dioxide – a gas that we “emit” every time we exhale – is a danger to public health and should be regulated, to its efforts to crack down on agriculture and even fishing equipment, the EPA has a seemingly endless stream of regulations that will kill jobs and further restrict economic growth. Just a few of these outrageous examples of EPA overreach include:

- [Endangerment Finding](#) – Despite the strong opposition of the American people and the ultimate defeat of “[cap and trade](#)” legislation in the United States Senate, the EPA has taken it upon itself to regulate emissions using the Clean Air Act to achieve the same result. These regulations will significantly raise energy costs for American families – disproportionately so in rural areas such as Northern California whose residents drive 25% more than our urban counterparts, not to mention the many energy inputs that go into our agricultural sector.
- Biomass – There are several facilities throughout our area that produce clean electricity from renewable forest biomass. Unfortunately these facilities are struggling to maintain operations due to regulations that deny them access to our national forests. Despite this reality, the EPA is moving forward with more unjustified and stringent regulations – known as “Maximum Achievable Control Technology” (MACT) – that could literally shut down these facilities. This is yet another hypocritical policy that will cause the loss of an important renewable energy source.
- Dust – The EPA has also issued an unprecedented draft policy intended to nearly double the current standard for regulating farm dust. If implemented as proposed, this standard could apply in such extreme circumstances as dust kicked up from driving down a gravel road or the movement of livestock. I recently joined several of my colleagues in [contacting](#) the EPA to oppose this policy, as this sort of overregulation threatens to cripple rural America.

· Lead – EPA recently [announced](#) that it would consider a petition from several radical environmental groups to “ban the manufacture, processing, and distribution in commerce of lead shot, bullets, and fishing sinkers.” While the EPA chose not to consider ammunition as part of this petition, it is continuing to accept comments for fishing equipment. Although the comment period closed on September 15th, I will do all I can to oppose any regulation EPA might pursue in response to this petition.

It will be an uphill fight, but I will continue working with my colleagues in Congress in doing all we can to change the Administration's course on these and other damaging regulations that will cause undue harm to rural America and the rest of our nation. We simply can't allow big government to dismantle our way of life through overregulation.